Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Agreement for Childcare Providers in Cambridgeshire 2010 - 2011

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childcare

Contents

4-5 **Background**

4 What is the Local Agreement?
4 Who is it for?
5 What to do next
5 Update flowchart

6-14 **The Local Agreement**

6 County Council responsibilities
7 Early years and childcare provider responsibilities
8-10 **Section One** Advice, information, support and challenge services to providers
11-13 **Section Two** Raising the quality of provision
13 **Section Three** Collecting data and information sharing
14 **Section Four** Managing the childcare market

15-26 **Appendices**

15 **Appendix A** Team and Service Contacts
16 **Appendix B** Cambridgeshire County Council Code of Conduct
17-21 **Appendix C** Early Years and Childcare Equalities Policy
22 **Appendix D** Early Years and Childcare Focussed Support Flowchart
23 **Appendix E** Early Years and Childcare Consultation Process Flowchart
24-26 **Appendix F** Grants Available 2009 - 2011

If you would like a copy of the text of this document in large print, Braille, audio tape or in another language, please call 01954 273360 or email: eycinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

All rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Cambridgeshire County Council.

© Cambridgeshire County Council 2009

Early Years and Childcare Local Agreement

What is the Local Agreement?

The [1]Childcare Act 2006 places duties on local authorities in relation to early years and childcare providers. Local authorities must:

- improve the well-being of children and young people
- reduce inequalities between children and young people in their area
- improve the outcomes of young children from birth to five years.

Significant sums of money are being invested to deliver a ten-year strategy for the improvement of childcare services for children and families 'Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen' Department for Education and Schools 2006.

The County Council needs to ensure that funding is used fairly and appropriately. Cambridgeshire's Early Years and Childcare Local Agreement outlines Cambridgeshire County Council's responsibilities and the expectations that the County Council has of providers who sign the Local Agreement.

Through this Local Agreement, and more generally, the County Council will share template policies and documentation with providers, as well as offering a variety of training courses. These resources are provided free of charge in order to support and assist providers. In signing the Local Agreement the provider is undertaking only to use such documents/materials for the purposes of their own setting(s). Providers are agreeing that they will not share the documentation/materials with other providers but will, instead, refer other providers back to the Local Authority for advice and support. The County Council will not accept any responsibility or liability in circumstances where County Council documentation/materials have been shared without specific consent being sought.

Who is it for?

- childminders
- playgroups and pre-schools
- childcare on domestic premises
- day nurseries
- out of school childcare.

and may include

- local authority maintained nursery classes/schools
- Ofsted registration-exempt childcare, managed by schools
- crèches
- activity clubs (where more than two activities are provided)
- children's centres
- independent schools
- nannies
- homecarers.

All maintained schools directly managing out of school childcare will receive an annual visit from a local authority adviser concerning their childcare provision. If you are unsure if this Local Agreement applies to you, please contact the Early Years and Childcare Service. See Appendix A.

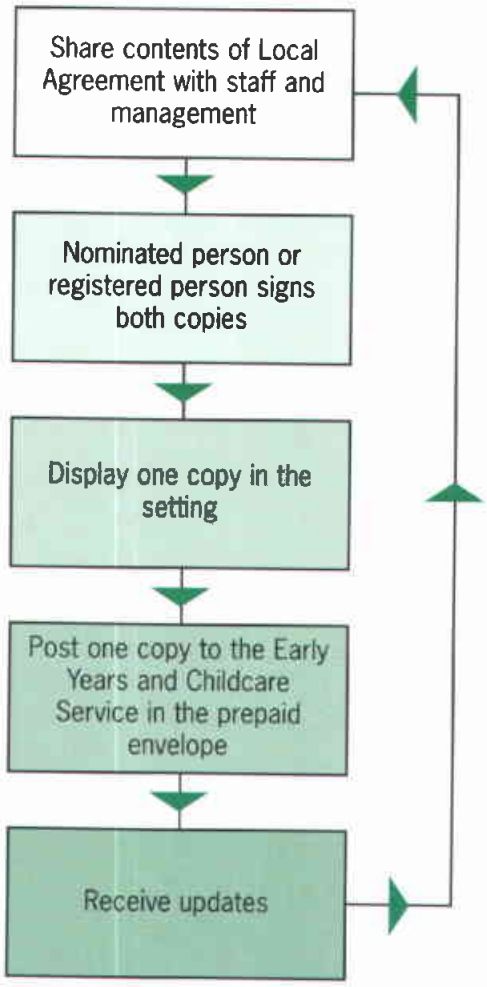
[1]The Local Agreement for Childcare Providers in Cambridgeshire should be read in conjunction with The Childcare Act 2006

What to do next

In the Local Agreement pack you will find two copies of the Local Agreement Acceptance Certificate. Please sign both copies and return one copy in the pre-paid envelope to the Early Years and Childcare Service. The second copy should be displayed in the setting. It is important that staff and management understand the contents of the Local Agreement. Please ensure that the person whose name appears on the Ofsted registration certificate (where applicable) signs both copies. If the provision is managed by a committee or governing body, or if the 'registered person' is an organisation, a nominated person should sign on behalf of the setting. See Fig 1.

Updates of the Local Agreement will be circulated to all early years and childcare providers as necessary.

Fig 1


Share contents of Local Agreement with staff and management
Nominated person or registered person signs both copies
Display one copy in the setting
Post one copy to the Early Years and Childcare Service in the prepaid envelope
Receive updates

The Local Agreement

Through this agreement the County Council will:

- [2] **Work collaboratively with early years and childcare providers to raise quality through the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework** – Section 2 and Appendix A
- **Offer timely and appropriate advice, support and challenge** – Section 1
- **Update the information about provision and inform enquirers through the Childcare Information Service (CIS) and the Families Information Service (FIS), where information is provided by Ofsted and/or the provider** – Section 3
- [3] **Support early years and childcare providers through the Ofsted registration and inspection process** – Section 1
- **Keep early years and childcare providers informed about relevant local and national changes** – Section 1
- **Provide or secure quality training that is effectively monitored and evaluated** – Section 2
- **Support practitioners to achieve early years and playwork qualifications** – Section 2
- **Manage the childcare market to ensure that the needs of children, families and communities are met** – Section 4 and Appendix E
- **Ensure that its staff comply with the County Council code of conduct** – Appendix B
- **Consult early years and childcare providers about initiatives that could impact on their provision** – Section 1
- **Actively support provision to improve outcomes for children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds** – Section 2
- **Apply the early years and childcare intervention strategy (focussed support) as outlined in the Schools Intervention Strategy. This may include, where necessary, the withdrawal of funding and/or support** – Appendix D
- **Manage the General SureStart Grant to best meet the needs of children and families in Cambridgeshire** – Appendix F
- **Manage Nursery Education Funding for free early years childcare places for eligible children** – Appendix F

[2] Use of the Quality Framework is optional for providers on the Voluntary Register
[3] Where applicable

The Local Agreement

Through this agreement Cambridgeshire early years and childcare providers will:

- **Commit to the Early Years and Childcare Equalities Policy** – Section 1 and Appendix C
- **Consult other providers and the County Council when expanding and/or developing provision** – Section 4
- **Engage with advisers, officers or other County Council staff** – Section 1
- **Agree to pre-arranged visits with advisers, officers or other County Council staff** – Section 1
- **Use any public funding appropriately, for its designated purpose and comply with any monitoring requirements** – Appendix F
- **Notify the County Council of interactions with Ofsted** – Section 2
- **Submit regular data returns and information as requested** – Section 3
- **Undertake appropriate training to ensure the professional development of staff** – Section 2
- **Fulfil the booking requirements for training offered through the Early Years and Childcare Service** – Section 2
- **Actively seek to improve outcomes for children especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds** – Section 2 and Appendix C
- **Ensure that children are protected from harm by following Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures** – Section 1
- **Ensure that children's transitions are supported, using appropriate documentation** – Section 2

The following criteria are compulsory for all signatories of the Local Agreement *except* providers on the Voluntary Register only, for whom they are optional:

- **Implement the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework** – Section 2
- **Ensure children are supported by appropriately trained designated staff** – Section 2

Section One

Advice, Information, Support and Challenge Services to Providers

In Cambridgeshire, support to early years and childcare providers comes from Children and Young People's Services (CYPS). Support for early years and childcare providers will come mainly from central services (Early Years and Childcare, Infrastructure Service and Standards and Effectiveness), supported by partner organisations, and from staff based in Area Teams.

There are three Area Teams, as follows:

- South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City
- Huntingdonshire
- East Cambridgeshire and Fenland

It is our intention that early years and childcare provision in Cambridgeshire will deliver services that enable children and young people to:

- be healthy
- be protected from harm or neglect and stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution to their provision and their wider community
- achieve economic well-being.

Advice, information, support and challenge is provided to improve outcomes for all children by:

- raising the quality of provision
- ensuring safety
- improving equality of access and opportunity
- improving practice, and
- complying with regulatory requirements, as necessary.

Advice, information, support and challenge are offered to settings through regular contact, including visits and regular mailings.

[4] **Providers should agree to pre-arranged meetings with their adviser and/or other professionals.**

Arrangements for the meeting should include:

- agreeing the purpose and agenda for the visit
- agreeing the nature and method of feedback.

The meeting should enable:

- exchange of views in a professional manner
- provision of information/evidence as requested in the context of the visit
- professional development activity with staff/management teams
- feedback from the provider about services offered.

[4] Providers on the voluntary register will not receive routine visits but can request support.

Advisers and officers have a duty to bring to the attention of the provider any factor that may compromise the well-being or safety of children.

A note of any visit will be agreed jointly at the time; one copy will remain with the provider and one copy will be filed in the provider's file, held in secure cabinets by the County Council. Contact with a provider will be recorded centrally on a secure database.

The Early Years and Childcare Service

This Service has overall responsibility for quality improvement, quality monitoring, support and challenge to early years and childcare providers in Cambridgeshire.

Early Years Foundation Stage Advisers (EYFSA) are the first point of contact for early years settings [0 – 5] and provide advice, information, support, and challenge to setting staff. The EYFSA works with early years settings to implement the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework.

Each out of school provider is allocated a Childcare and Playwork Adviser (CAPA). They are the first point of contact for settings [5 – 14+] and provide advice, information, support and challenge to setting staff. The CAPA works with out of school settings to implement the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework.

Each registered childminder is allocated a Childminding Support and Development Officer (CSDO) who will be their first point of contact, provide advice, information, support and challenge and work with childminders to implement the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework.

The Service also provides qualification and continuous professional development training and recruitment and career guidance. Childcare providers can also access support from the Equalities Manager/Adviser.

Infrastructure Service

This Service is part of the Strategy and Commissioning Directorate. It is responsible for managing the childcare market, ensuring that there is sufficient childcare for all parents who need it to enable them to work or train. The service is responsible for capital planning e.g. new buildings and the development of children's centres and extended schools. Development Coordinators work with new and existing childcare providers to ensure sufficiency of childcare. The Childcare Business and Employer Support Team and partners support childcare managers and committees with management, business and governance issues.

The Commissioning and Performance Team manages the administration and distribution of Nursery Education Funding for eligible children. This is available to providers who are Ofsted registered and members of Cambridgeshire's Nursery Education Funding Scheme.

Standards and Effectiveness (3-11) (11-18)

This service is responsible for monitoring and supporting the quality of provision in schools, implementing the Primary and Secondary National Strategies and leads on intervention in primary and secondary schools causing concern.

Inclusion

Each area has an Early Years Support for Learning team. Area SENCos and Sector Support Workers work with staff in early years settings to develop inclusive practice. Early Years Specialist Support Teachers and other specialists may also work with settings caring for children with high level complex needs.

Childcare settings 5+ receive support from the Childcare and Playwork Inclusion Team.

The County Council provides additional support through a number of contractual arrangements with partner organisations.

Contacts for all teams and services can be found in Appendix A.

Safeguarding

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) helps to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded properly by supporting key agencies to work effectively together. All early years and childcare providers are expected to understand and follow LSCB guidance.

Section Two

Raising the Quality of Provision

The Early Years and Childcare Service uses a differentiated model of support and challenge. A range of criteria is used to identify appropriate levels of support (intensive, targeted, universal). Settings will be audited regularly to ensure an appropriate level of support and challenge is being provided.

The Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework supports the improvement of services to all children and young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

All group providers, in the private and voluntary sector will receive an annual quality-monitoring visit. Providers and their adviser/officer will work together to evaluate their practice against set quality standards. An action plan will be created and ongoing support and challenge provided either directly by the adviser/officer or by appropriate colleagues within the County Council. Childminders will receive a quality-monitoring visit as part of a three-year cycle.

Providers who cause significant concern and are therefore unable to sustain quality will be provided with focussed support. Focussed support brings together teams from within the County Council to enable a coordinated response to help providers overcome their difficulties. This process is supportive but can escalate, according to levels of provider engagement, to the ultimate withdrawal of funding and support.

Ofsted

Ofsted registers and inspects early years and childcare providers on the Early Years Register and Childcare Register (compulsory). Providers are required to deliver services in accordance with prescribed regulatory requirements.

Adults/children/young people may inform County Council staff of concerns about the service delivery offered by providers. Where necessary, regulators including Ofsted will be informed.

Registered providers are required to notify Ofsted of:

- changes to their registration details
- intentions to extend or close provision
- significant incidents.

And are expected to notify the Early Years and Childcare Service of:

- changes to their registration details
- intentions to extend or close provision
- significant incidents
- Ofsted visits.

Ofsted notifies the Early Years and Childcare Service about inspection outcomes and changes to registration.

Some childcare is exempt from compulsory Ofsted registration. Where this type of childcare is managed by a school, the County Council should be notified about:

- Ofsted visits
- intention to open, extend or close provision
- setting details in order to inform the Childcare Information Service.

Training

The Workforce Development team produces an annual training programme with details of the qualification training in childcare and playwork that is available throughout the county. It also includes details of professional development courses that can be accessed by practitioners working in childcare settings that have signed the Local Agreement.

Each setting on the Early Years Register and the Childcare Register (compulsory) must have a designated person who has attended training that is updated every three years and approved by the Early Years and Childcare Service for:

- special needs (Special Needs Coordinator - SENCo)
- equalities (Equalities Named Coordinator - ENCo)
- child protection (Designated Child Protection Officer - DCPO)

Where early years and childcare provided by a school is Ofsted registered, the childcare provision must comply with Ofsted requirements.

Where schools manage early years and childcare (not Ofsted registered) the schools' designated persons may fulfill the designated person functions.

In the case of Approved Childminding Networks, the Network Coordinator will be the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and Equalities Named Coordinator (ENCo).

Settings must also ensure that regulatory requirements are met for:

- qualifications and training
- first aid
- food hygiene
- health and safety.

Early years and childcare providers for children aged birth to five years must also access appropriate training in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All early years and childcare providers should have a named behaviour management coordinator.

To discourage non-attendance at training, there is a small booking fee for courses that is non-refundable. Settings and staff that repeatedly do not attend courses without cancelling their places or accrue bad debts may be denied access to further training.

Withdrawal of funding or support

There is an expectation that childcare providers will follow the guidance set out in the Local Agreement regarding the obligations placed on them. This includes commitment to and engagement with the Early Years and Childcare Quality Framework where applicable.

Providers must have an appropriately trained Equalities Named Coordinator, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and a Designated Child Protection Coordinator. Where early years and childcare provision is managed by a school, a system must be in place that links to the school's policy and procedures.

Settings that do not comply with the requirements of the Local Agreement will become the subject of focussed support and may have all funding and access to advice, information, and support withdrawn, including training and advertising through the Childcare Information Service (CIS) and the Families Information Service (FIS).

Notification of improper use of funding or a poor quality service may be brought to the attention of the County Council by members of the public, provider employees, County Council employees, County Council (Audit), other agencies and/or Ofsted. The notification will activate an investigation by the appropriate manager within the County Council.

The County Council will require the cooperation of the setting in conducting their investigation. If the investigation identifies genuine misunderstanding of requirements, which is corrected following advice, the process will be concluded. However, in the event of misuse this process may require the return of some or all funding and legal action if deemed necessary.

Section Three

Collecting Data and Information Sharing

The County Council may collect the following data from providers regularly:

- childcare place data and occupancy levels
- financial and management information
- contact details of registered person (where applicable) and setting management
- workforce development information
- equalities data
- data to support model of differentiated support
- individual child data, including progress data, where funding is in place.

Advisers and officers employed by the County Council directly, or indirectly through partner organisations, need to share information.

Early Years and Childcare providers should be aware that information given to an adviser or officer may be shared where this is of benefit to children and young people. Consent will be sought unless the safety of a child or adult is compromised.

The County Council will ensure parents, carers and providers receive relevant information about childcare services.

Section Four

Managing the Childcare Market

Childcare Sufficiency

Local authorities have a duty to secure, as far as is practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in order for them to undertake training or work. Cambridgeshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is available on the Cambridgeshire County Council website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childcare. The CSA identifies some areas where there may be gaps in provision, and providers interested in expanding or creating new provision are advised to consult the CSA. New providers and existing providers who wish to expand or create places without public funding are asked to inform the local authority of their intentions.

Cambridgeshire County Council may occasionally advertise opportunities to open new provision. Providers who wish to be directly notified of these advertised opportunities should contact the Childcare Development Team.

Consultation Process for New Childcare Places

1. A Development Coordinator works with a new provider or an existing provider who wishes to expand. They consult with other advisers and officers about the proposed development/expansion and any application for funding. The provider should ensure that the need for the proposed provision has been carefully researched.

2. The provider is required to send a consultation letter to all early years and childcare providers within their area. Providers are required to show evidence of consultation before a bid for public funding can be submitted. The Development Coordinator can provide a template consultation letter and support the process.

3. If there are objections to a proposed development/expansion these will be reviewed by the Grants Panel.

4. If the panel decides that expansion could prejudice existing early years and childcare provision the County Council will not be able to support the application and the provider will be advised of this.

See Appendix E

Promoting Childcare

The local authority will engage in activity that will raise awareness of:

- careers in childcare
- the benefits of quality early years and childcare provision
- access to early years and childcare provision
- employer supported childcare.

Appendices

TEAM AND SERVICE CONTACTS

Early Years and Childcare Service
Unit 3, Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way,
Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL

Tel: 01954 273360
Email: eycinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Childcare Business and Employer Support
(including the Pre-School Learning Alliance)
(Infrastructure Services)
Unit 3, Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way,
Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL

Tel: 01954 284203
Email: childcarebusinessandemployersupport
@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Childcare Development Team
(Infrastructure Services)
Unit 3, Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way,
Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL

Tel: 01954 283373
Email: childcaredevelopment
@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Childcare Information Service
(Opportunity Links)

Tel: 0845 04 54 014
Email: info@opp-links.org.uk
www.opportunity-links.org.uk

Childminding Support and Development Team (National Childminding Association)

Tel: 01954 273358
Email: childminding@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Childcare and Playwork Advisers

Tel: 01954 273365
Email: childcareandplayworkteam
@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Early Years Foundation Stage Advisers

Tel: 01954 273339
Email: eyfsa@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Nursery Education Funding Team
CC1209, Castle Court, Shire Hall,
Cambridge CB3 0AP

Tel: 01223 699805
Email: nef@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Workforce Development Team
– Training and Qualifications
Unit 3, Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way,
Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL

Tel: 01954 273355 / 01954 273359
Email: eyctraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Workforce Development Team
- Childcare Careers
Unit 3, Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way,
Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL

Tel: 01954 273371
Email: childcarecareers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Area Support for Learning Teams 0-5yrs

Huntingdonshire
Tel: 01480 373756

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire
Tel: 01223 508731

Fenland and East Cambridgeshire
Tel: 01354 653902

Support for Learning 5+

Countywide
Tel: 01954 273365

APPENDIX B

Cambridgeshire County Council

CODE OF CONDUCT

Employees must:

1. Be open, fair and show respect at all times in dealings with the public, councillors, contractors and colleagues.

2. Act honestly at all times and within the law.

3. Attend work when they are supposed to and work to the best of their ability when they are there.

4. Take pride in working for the Council.

5. Treat Council property and equipment with respect.

6. Comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policy and work safely at all times.

7. Comply with the Council's disciplinary rules.

Employees must not:

8. Abuse their position as a Council employee to take advantage of, victimise, harass or discriminate against anyone or to seek benefits and/or favours for themselves or their family, in whatever form, e.g. gifts/hospitality, financial benefits and/or appointment to Council jobs.

9. Abuse any access they have as a Council employee to confidential and/or sensitive information or to Internet/e-mail systems.

10. Bring the Council into disrepute by anything that they say or do.

Cambridgeshire Early Years and Childcare

EQUALITIES POLICY

Revised 2009

This policy aims to:

- ensure that all Service Plans linked to the development and support of early years education and childcare promote equality of access and opportunity for all children to learn, play, make progress and be well cared for;
- ensure that all [1]children can access the early years education, childcare and/or out of school provision, developed and supported by Cambridgeshire County Council;
- ensure that service [2]providers implement the Equalities Policy; and
- ensure that all [3]staff are employed in accordance with the Equalities Policy.

These principles are the basis of the Equalities Policy. They will establish the necessary conditions for ensuring that equalities issues underpin all activities and actions undertaken by those developing and supporting early years education and childcare. They will ensure that all services and settings create an environment in which children, parents, carers and staff are able to participate, where there is diversity and choice, where everyone is able to develop to their potential and where inequalities are addressed sensitively.

In addition, the policy seeks to ensure that:

- resources are targeted effectively on those who need them most; and
- discriminatory attitudes, prejudices and institutional behaviour are challenged

The Early Years and Childcare Equalities Policy applies to everyone in Cambridgeshire involved in the provision of early years education, childcare and out of school activities for children and young people 0-14+.

The Early Years and Childcare Service will seek commitment to the Equalities Policy from all partner organisations. It may complement partner organisations' existing equality and anti-discriminatory policies, statements and initiatives, including all recruitment and selection procedures, complaints, training, information and communication and resources strategies.

The Early Years and Childcare Equalities Strategy Group will ensure the services and procedures are accessible and inclusive by developing an annual work plan that will be regularly reviewed and monitored.

[1] All children whatever their age, gender, ability, attainment, ethnicity, educational or personal need, religion, belief, home language or background;

[2] Service providers to include providers of early years education and childcare, out of school care, training providers and others operating within a contract;

[3] Staff to include, providers of early years education and childcare and out of school care and their staff, trainers and staff employed under contract.

APPENDIX C

POLICY STATEMENT

The policy aims to identify disadvantage associated with disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or marital status and work to eliminate the barriers that disadvantage equal access to services and employment.

The County Council will work to reduce inequalities by:

- identifying children and families who face significant obstacles to accessing early years and childcare provision. This will include those for whom English is an additional language, those having special needs, refugees, asylum seekers, Travellers and looked-after children;
- maintaining records and statistics to monitor access, training, equality and inequality issues; and
- seeking to narrow the gap in outcomes between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the rest.

The County Council will seek to ensure all early years and childcare settings are fully committed to meeting their obligations under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 by:

- ensuring all children and staff are encouraged and able to achieve the best of which they are capable
- respecting and valuing differences between people
- preparing children for life in a diverse society
- making the setting a place where everyone, taking account of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, feels welcomed and valued
- promoting good relations between different racial and cultural groups
- ensuring that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained
- acknowledging the existence of racism and taking steps to prevent it
- opposing all forms of racism, racial prejudice and racial harassment
- being proactive in tackling and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

CONSULTATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY

The County Council will seek to improve consultation with and participation of all early years and childcare service users and providers by:

- seeking input from service users [children, young people, parents/carers and staff] to ensure the provision of a comprehensive service of consistent quality that meets the needs of the whole community including minority groups and those with specific needs;
- seeking the views of minority groups, or those with specific needs who may not be making full use of the services offered, on their needs and requirements and taking actions to redress; and
- ensuring that each service area engages in self-assessment, scrutiny and audit regarding equality within its service delivery.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER CARE

Accessibility

The County Council will ensure that the services and procedures for which it is accountable are accessible and inclusive by:

- ensuring that early years and childcare practitioners are aware of the services available, using translations[1] of information, where necessary;
- creating an environment and atmosphere where people can express their views and where they are acknowledged;
- responding to all issues raised in a prompt, appropriate and courteous manner;
- securing services that are available at times and in places that suit children, parents and carers; and
- ensuring through consultation and monitoring that services continue to be relevant and responsive to needs.

Culture

The policy will promote the diversity of culture and experience of families in Cambridgeshire by expecting early years and childcare service providers to:

- ensure that all cultures are accorded equal value and respect;
- create opportunities for diversity and choice within programmes/activities;
- raise awareness and develop understanding of a range of cultures, especially within mono-cultural communities, where it may be necessary to counter ethno-centric attitudes and behaviour;
- use materials, resources and language which promote positive images; and
- recruit staff and members of management committees to reflect the cultural diversity of the wider community.

Inclusion

The policy will promote inclusive practice for families and children with special needs by ensuring County Council staff and those employed within a contract:

- work with service providers so that children can access their local early years, care, and/or leisure setting, wherever possible;
- involve parents and families in relevant decision making and communication;
- have regard at all times to the needs and expectations of background and culture; and
- upport access to specialist services for advice guidance and support.

In addition the policy will promote inclusion by expecting service providers to address the individual care, education and leisure needs of children with special needs by:

- raising awareness and developing understanding about the individual needs of children;
- developing and/or adapting programmes/activities to meet children's individual needs; and
- communicating with parents and families about the care, education and/or leisure needs of the child.

[1] Translations to include information on audiocassette, Braille, visual interpretations, languages and verbal communication.

APPENDIX C

Quality and Flexibility

The County Council will require service providers to provide activities and programmes of high quality that are relevant, community sensitive and address inequalities and inclusion in positive ways by:

- addressing the rights of all children, parents and carers to have access to affordable, good quality services based on principles of equality;
- providing premises, environment, equipment and resources that are relevant to the experience and needs of users; and
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of equalities strategies on the quality of learning, care and leisure activities.

Discrimination, Abuse and Harassment

The County Council will promote the protection of children and young people from discrimination/abuse/harassment by requiring service providers to:

- ensure that the highest priority is attached to the rights and protection of children;
- listen and respond to the experiences of children and incorporate these into reviews of programmes and practice;
- respond positively to children who disclose discriminatin/abuse/harassment; and
- work with partner agencies to help to secure the support they may need.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment

The County Council will promote equality of employment opportunities and aims to ensure that all employment procedures are consistent with current legislation by:

- requiring all service providers and staff to ensure they are fully aware of the implications of the most recent legislation regarding equalities through training and/or reading and research; and
- requiring that employers comply with current legislation and employment codes of practice and are committed to carrying through the Equalities Policy.

All agencies providing activities to support early years and childcare will demonstrate commitment to the Early Years and Childcare Equalities Policy and have in place an Equalities Policy and/or Statement that reflects their own responsibilities and ensures that:

- all employees and applicants are selected for employment, training, and promotion on the basis of their ability, qualifications, experience and fitness for the job and are treated in all respects on the basis of merit and ability;
- no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or marital status;
- no job applicant or employee is disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified; and
- their employment practices including recruitment and selection, promotion, contracts, conditions of service and retention are open and transparent.

Training

The Early Years and Childcare Service will ensure that training is available to all practitioners on a range of equalities and inclusion issues across the county. The training will be monitored to ensure high quality. Training providers will commit to an assurance that equalities will be embedded in all aspects of training.

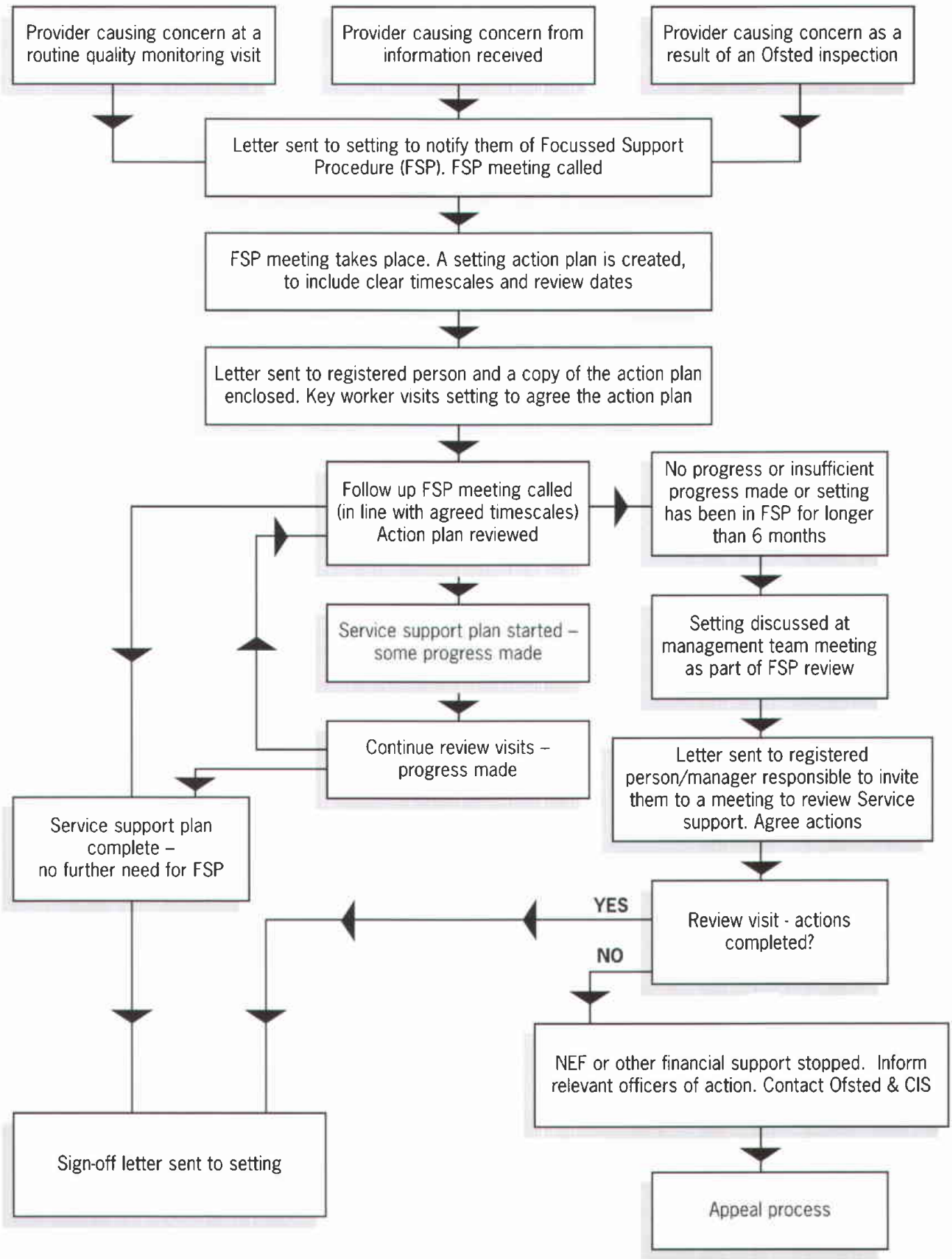
MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Early Years and Childcare Strategy Group will ensure that equalities issues, including participation rates and identified issues/barriers are monitored and identified issues addressed.

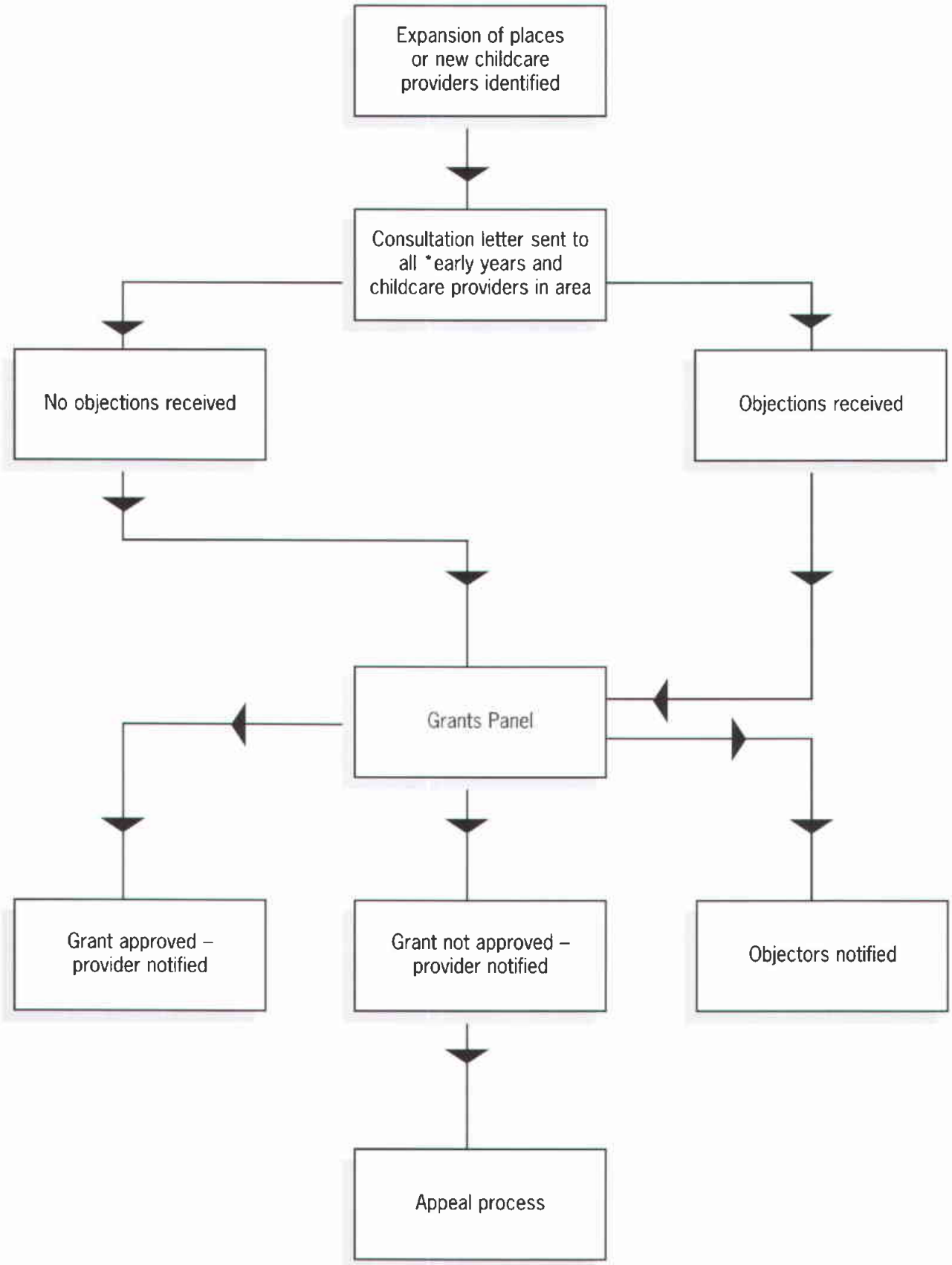
The Early Years and Childcare Strategy Group will review the appropriateness of its Equalities Policy and any associated procedures and practices in line with legislation, any other policy changes as necessary and on a biennial basis.

APPENDIX D

FOCUSSED SUPPORT PROCEDURE - FLOWCHART


Provider causing concern at a routine quality monitoring visit
Provider causing concern from information received
Provider causing concern as a result of an Ofsted inspection
Letter sent to setting to notify them of Focussed Support Procedure (FSP). FSP meeting called
FSP meeting takes place. A setting action plan is created, to include clear timescales and review dates
Letter sent to registered person and a copy of the action plan enclosed. Key worker visits setting to agree the action plan
Follow up FSP meeting called (in line with agreed timescales) Action plan reviewed
No progress or insufficient progress made or setting has been in FSP for longer than 6 months
Service support plan started – some progress made
Setting discussed at management team meeting as part of FSP review
Continue review visits – progress made
Letter sent to registered person/manager responsible to invite them to a meeting to review Service support. Agree actions
Service support plan complete – no further need for FSP
YES
NO
Review visit - actions completed?
NEF or other financial support stopped. Inform relevant officers of action. Contact Ofsted & CIS
Sign-off letter sent to setting
Appeal process

CONSULTATION PROCESS - FLOWCHART


Expansion of places or new childcare providers identified
Consultation letter sent to all *early years and childcare providers in area
No objections received
Objections received
Grants Panel
Grant approved – provider notified
Grant not approved – provider notified
Objectors notified
Appeal process

*defined as within a radius of three miles in a rural area and one mile in an urban area.

APPENDIX F

GRANTS AVAILABLE 2009/2011

The Government provides funding through the General Sure Start Grant (GSSG) to local authorities to enable them to fulfil the needs of the ten year childcare strategy 'Choice for parents, the best start for children; making it happen'. The following grants are available in Cambridgeshire during the financial year 2009/2010.

New Childcare Places

Funding may be available where childcare places are:

- linked to national targets, eg. childcare in children's centres or extended schools; increase in hours of NEF provision
- linked to the childcare sufficiency programme.

Sustainability Grant

The County Council operates a limited fund to support early years and childcare providers in short-term financial difficulty. Group providers are eligible to apply if the setting meets grant criteria.

Transition Grant

This grant is available to support settings facing significant issues where closure is likely and it has been identified that a change of management structure will:

- provide continuity of care and/or education
- improve quality of the provision and outcomes for children
- improve quality of management therefore improving setting leadership
- prevent the creation of gaps in the childcare market.

Premises

Funding may be available to support premises improvements and/or to support a variety of capital projects.

Outcomes, Quality and Inclusion (OQI) Grant

Capital grants are available to all providers who meet grant criteria to develop delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage, develop inclusive practice and access to information technology.

Social Inclusion Fund

Early Years and childcare providers (offering 2 hrs+) who have signed the Local Agreement can apply for funding to support a childcare place for a child facing social exclusion. Applications are considered against criteria set out under the following headings:

- child protection
- socio/economic
- health/medical
- anti social behaviour
- family concerns.

Special Needs Funding 0-14+

Funding may be available as part of a support package to support children and young people with special needs to access an early years and childcare setting.

Graduate Leader Funding

The Graduate Leader Fund supports early years settings in the private and voluntary sector to improve the quality of their provision by employing or developing graduate staff.

The Early Years and Childcare Service requires that providers agree to an additional contractual agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council that outlines the way the grant can be spent.

Qualification Funding

Providers can apply for financial support towards qualification training fees for the coming year.

Providers should work in a childcare setting and the qualification will need to be appropriate for your job role.

Quality Assurance

Early Years and Childcare providers who are working through the Cambridgeshire Quality Framework can apply to complete a nationally recognised and locally approved Quality Assurance Scheme. Funding is available to support scheme costs, mentoring time and a contribution towards staff time.

Childminder Set Up Grant

In Cambridgeshire a package of training and business support for childminders is available. The 'Ready to Mind' training pack consists of:

- information sharing briefings
- first aid training
- introduction to childminding practice (ICP)
- *NCMA quality start package (optional).

*consisting of NCMA publications, the Quality Standards Workbook, one year's NCMA Membership and Public Liability Insurance.

Childminder Additional Services Grant

Childminders who provide additional services can apply for this grant. Additional services could include:

- Baby care (under 1)
- Overnight care
- Care for children with additional needs
- Weekend care or unsociable hours (between 6pm and 8am)
- Out of school holiday care (aged 5 and over).

APPENDIX F

Childminder Sustainability Grant

Childminders can apply for this grant if they are:

- experiencing problems, which could cause them to close
- needing to take action following an Ofsted inspection
- experiencing a short-term financial pressure (e.g. unfilled vacancy)
- experiencing long-term problems with their business (e.g. advertising and marketing)
- needing help in meeting the costs of training
- incurring costs that link to the development of the quality of provision.

Nursery Education Funding (NEF)

Early years providers who are members of Cambridgeshire's Nursery Education Funding Scheme can access funding to provide free early years places to all eligible children. Providers must have signed the Local Agreement, and be either:

- Ofsted registered

  or

- Ofsted registration-exempt and managed by a school.

Cambridgeshire County Council
Office of Children and Young People's Services
Early Years and Childcare Service
Bar Hill Business Park, Saxon Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8SL